

## **"The Universe Story – An Epic for our Time"**

**Thomas Berry at Holy Cross Centre, Port Burwell, Ontario, 1994**

### **Summary**

In a sweeping series of lectures, Thomas Berry outlines why the contemporary cultural traditions in the areas of religion, education, science and law/politics are "incompetent" to assist with "The Great Work" of our time and what contextual perspectives, particularly in the area of religion, might be helpful in order to re-vitalize these traditions as we move towards an Ecozoic Age.

For Thomas, the Universe is the only "context without a context". He suggests that we detach from, without negating, our cultural traditions and see them anew in light of the Universe Story, then return to them to see what wisdom emerges from this new perspective.

### **Questions/Points for Discussion**

1. Thomas powerfully states that humans need to intimately feel integral with the great emergent Universe and discover our proper role as those beings in whom the Universe reflects on and celebrates itself in its numinous origin and special mode of conscious self-awareness. How would this context affect the human cultural traditions of religion, education, science, law and politics?
2. Thomas says "The Universe is the primary University". Discuss the implications of this statement.
3. Thomas states that "The primary religion of the Universe IS the Universe". He also says that the primary revelatory experience is immediate to us in the wonders of the sky, forest, mountains, prairies, and sea in all their beauty. When we are cut off from this our soul shrivels. He says if you lose the forest you lose your soul and that verbal revelation has to be secondary to primary revelation. Discuss what this context would mean for religious traditions with which you are familiar.
4. According to Thomas, all epic stories are journey stories and provide the psychic energy we need for the journey. The Universe Story is the epic story for our time. He suggests that we are transitioning from the terminal Cenozoic to the integral Ecozoic and that the energy for this journey will come from: indigenous wisdom, the wisdom of women, a re-activated wisdom of human religious traditions, and the wisdom of the revelatory experience of science. How do you see each of these four areas contributing to The Great Work?